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PLANNING INSTITUTE ADVISES URBAN AREAS TO GROW RURAL AREAS WON'T

Planning specialists advised Montana Local planning officials that the treasure state's urban areas will continue to grow while rural areas and villages will continue to lose population as the third Montana Planning Institute opened Thursday (Sept. 7) at Flathead Lake.

David K. Hartley, of Washington, D.C., said national studies have shown that job opportunities are better than the national average in medium-sized communities of 10,000 to 500,000 but that smaller towns and the larger cities will have difficulty creating jobs fast enough to provide work for all.

He said this was due to rural migration continuing into the cities while rural migrants lack the skills to compete in the job market of the larger cities. Meanwhile, jobs for those remaining in rural areas are increasingly scarce, Hartley said, noting that Montana's experience reflects this national trend.

Prof. John Borchert, of the University of Minnesota, said regional findings for the ninth federal reserve district enforced Hartley's views. Prof. Borchert said small towns in Minnesota, the Dakotas and Montana have declined in economic opportunity reflecting improvements in agricultural productivity and the pull of jobs in larger urban centers. These developments challenge local officials and community leaders to plan for their future in order to ease the economic transition involved, he said.

Mr. Hartley is associated with the American Institute of Planners in Washington, D.C. and is director of the Council of State Planning Agencies in Washington, D.C. He was assistant director of the Montana State Planning Board from 1956 to 1959 and graduated from Montana State University, Bozeman.

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Prof. Borchert is director of Urban Studies for the Upper Midwest Economic Study.

Friday's session of the Institute will present representatives of state and federal agencies in discussion of aids for local planning and workshops on the development of effective land use controls in Montana communities.

The Institute attracted about 100 planning board members, local officials and guests at the University of Montana Biological Station. The program was jointly sponsored by UM, the Association of Montana Planning Boards and the State Department of Planning and Economic Development.